

VISION 2012

Conant Brook



A Plan for the Next Ten Years

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Vision 2012

Our Ten Year Plan to is designed to bring you more enjoyment at Conant Brook and keep the flood control facility in top condition.

Vision 2012 is an evolving document, a planning tool that will promote and encourage additional projects and improvements to our facilities and programs solely for the visiting public at Conant Brook. The project management team will use this document during the annual budget process to ensure the missions of the Corps and the approved goals of the community are implemented.

We present this plan to get your insights, comments and recommendations so we can better tailor our vision to your requests. We appreciate your feedback!

History

As a result of severe flooding that occurred during the hurricanes of 1936, 1938 and 1955, a series of flood control projects were built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Connecticut River basin. Conant Brook Dam was authorized by the Flood Control Act dated 1960, House Document 434, 86th Congress, 2nd Session. Authorization for development and use of the reservoir area for public recreation is contained in Section 4 of the Flood Control Act of 1944, approved 22 December 1944, Public Law 534, 78th Congress, 2nd Session.

Conant Brook Dam, completed in September 1966, is located on Vinica Brook, approximately 7.5 miles upstream from the Quabog River, approximately 12 miles upstream from the confluence of the Quabog and Chicopee Rivers. Conant Brook Dam provides for flood protection along the Chicopee River and reduces flood stages in the Connecticut River, and provides major flood protection to the Town of Monson and the Quabog River flood plain. The total area of the project is 471 acres, of which 469 acres were purchased in fee and 2 acres are held in flowage easement. As of December 2001 the dam has prevented over \$2.3 million in cumulative flood damages.

Today

Natural and recreation resources at Conant Brook provide social, economic and environmental benefits. The following tables are based on 1999 visitation figures:

Social Benefits

Recreation Facilities

- 1 recreation areas
- 0 picnic sites
- 0 camping sites
- 0 playgrounds
- 0 swimming areas

- 24 trail miles
- 0 fishing docks
- 0 boat ramps
- 0 marinas
- 0 marina slips

Recreation Visits (person-trips)

- 26,600 in total
- 0 picnickers
- 0 campers
- 0 swimmers
- 0 water skiers
- 0 boaters
- 2,394 sightseers
- 4,788 fishermen
- 1,064 hunters
- 16,758 others

Social Benefits in Perspective

By providing opportunities for active recreation, Corps lakes also help overcome one of the most significant of the nation's health problems: lack of physical activity.

Exercise opportunities like those offered at Corps lakes also have a positive effect on individuals' mental and emotional outlook and sense of well-being by:

- Strengthening family ties and friendships.
- Providing opportunities for children to develop personal skills and social values while building self-esteem.
- Expanding knowledge about the area's nature and culture.
- Increasing everyone's safety when participating in recreational activities in and outside of Corps recreational areas.

Economic Benefits

Economic Benefits*

- 26,600 visits per year.
- \$0.35 million in visitor spending within 30 miles of the Corps lake. 66% of the spending was captured by local economy as direct sales effects.

With multiplier effects, visitor trip spending resulted in:

- \$0.37 million in total sales.
- \$0.20 million in total income.
- Supported 10 jobs in the local community surrounding the lake.

* From visitor trip spending within 30 miles of the lake only, does not include purchases of durable goods.

Economic Benefits in Perspective

- Visitors to Corps lakes spend money on trip expenses such as lodging and meals, and on durable goods like boats and campers.
- This spending contributes to the local and national economies by supporting jobs and generating income to those who directly and indirectly provide goods and services to Corps visitors.
- Revenues from visitor spending represent a sizable component of the economy in many communities around Corps lakes.

Environmental Benefits

Environmental Resources

- 469 land acres
- 0 water acres
- 0 shoreline miles
- 3 acres reforested
- 0 environmental interpretation contacts

Environmental Resources in Perspective

Recreation experiences increase:

- Motivation to learn more about the environment.
- Sensitivity toward the environment.
- Deeper understanding of environmental processes.
- Awareness of environmental issues.
- Knowledge about the environment and one's place in it.

Resources

As the annual budget has remained fixed for the past ten years and is not projected to increase in the next ten years, our expenditures increase every year. With the cost of living increasing we too are affected. Everything from gas and oil, to repairing a 40-year-old facility, drain our resources – therefore, we continually look for new ways to accomplish our mission.

Through interpretation and outreach education we want to build partnerships with local business and community groups. Volunteers donated almost \$2,000 of time and materials in 2002 and we should top that in 2003. The following are plans and ideas in each of our major program areas. We are looking for feedback and input on how we can accomplish all of our goals and objectives within the next ten years.



Operation and Maintenance of Flood Control Facilities

Goal: To maintain all flood control facilities in a high state of readiness.

Objectives:

2003 Installation of Underground Power Lines to Crest (top) of Dam. To enable us in maintenance of the dam, improved communications, and to provide a park host site with electricity to run the small appliances associated with a small RV, power lines will be run to the crest of the dam.

2004 Improved Downstream Access. We will be improving access to the downstream toe (base of dam) to ensure maintenance and construction vehicles can complete all construction tasks in a safe, efficient matter.



Recreation Management, Interpretation, Environmental Education and Outreach

Goal: Promote, improve and expand outdoor recreation opportunities in a safe and family oriented environment while protecting and enhancing the project resources and surrounding environment. To increase awareness of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the valuable resources we are managing.

Objectives:

2003 Establishment of Park Host Site at the Conant Brook Damsite. To provide you with better information, your trail and parking areas cleaner sanitized bathrooms we are planning to place a park host site at the Conant Brook Damsite. The park host will be responsible for daily cleanings of trails and restrooms, and is available for your assistance. They will have the ability to reach local law enforcement as well as federal park rangers if you need the assistance. The park host will be a volunteer, provided with a RV site at little cost to the taxpayer. They will also provide in small maintenance tasks, e.g., painting, trail maintenance, etc.

2004 Installation of Sealed Vault Toilets 'Romtek' Brand at the Conant Brook Damsite.

For your convenience and sanitary needs a permanently installed accessible unisex toilet (one person use at a time) will be installed at this area.

These are waterless and odorless toilets designed by the Romtek Company and are working quite well at other U.S.

Army Corps of Engineer facilities such

as Buffumville Lake in Charlton, Massachusetts and West Hill Dam in Uxbridge, Massachusetts.



2005 Installation of Drinking Water Supply for Public Consumption.

To satisfy your thirst prior to and after a walk a seasonal drinking fountain will be provided at the damsite.

2006 Installation of Public Pay Phone. For your safety we are planning to install a pay phone that you can use for your convenience and in case of emergency.

2002 – 2012 Trail Improvements. We are planning to continue yearly trail maintenance with placement of swales to handle storm water, and application of gravel to repair worn trail surfaces.

Some trail sections will receive switchbacks to eliminate erosive vertical trails.

Cultural and Historical Resources, Natural Resources and the Environment

Goals: Identify, preserve, celebrate and promote historical and cultural resources with the least amount of impact while enhancing the public's knowledge of their significance. Natural resources will be conserved, protected, managed and restored for future generations. Support sustainable use of renewable resources.

Objectives:

Annual Boundary Maintenance.

Partners

In these times, the Federal Government is tasked to do more with less. Now more than ever, partnering with other agencies, civic groups and users of our resources is the best way to do business. Below are many, but not all of the “Partners” the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers works with at Conant Brook.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs	The Nature Conservancy
State Historic Preservation Office	Representatives and Senators
Local Historical Societies	Monson Library
National Guard	AmeriCorps
Abutters	Student Conservation Corps
Town of Monson	Hampden County Sheriff
Massachusetts Environmental Police	U.S. Geological Survey
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Natural Heritage
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	
Massachusetts Riverways Program	
Massachusetts Public Access Board	
Thames River Flood Control Commission	
Worcester Telegram & Gazette	
WESO	

Conclusion

As we looking forward over the next ten years, we will strive to appreciate and conserve our cultural, historical, recreational and natural resources. We are committed to enhancing your experiences at Conant Brook. New volunteers and partnerships with residents, other agencies and local governments are key to our success in preserving the quality of life in our community.

For More Information: Call, email or write

East Brimfield Lake Office
24 Riverview Ave.
Fiskdale, (Sturbridge), MA
01518-1243
(508) 347-3705
(508) 347-8732 (fax)

Project Manager:

[Keith W. Beecher](mailto:keith.w.beecher@usace.army.mil) keith.w.beecher@usace.army.mil

Park Rangers:

[Thomas A. Chamberland](mailto:thomas.a.chamberland@usace.army.mil)
thomas.a.chamberland@usace.army.mil
[Merlon A. Bassett](mailto:merlon.a.bassett@usace.army.mil)
merlon.a.bassett@usace.army.mil

To get to East Brimfield Lake

Take the Mass Pike 90 to exit 9 and then Route 20 West. **OR** Take Interstate 84 to exit 3 and then Route 20 West through Sturbridge, 3 miles to Riverview Avenue on left. Follow signs to Project office. Please drive carefully.

To get to Conant Brook Dam

Take State Route 32 and Wales Road in Monson. OR Take State Route 19 and Monson Road in Wales. Follow signs to Conant Brook Dam. Please drive carefully.

